

VZCZCXYZ0011
OO RUEHWEB

DE RUEHC #4442 0491355
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 181352Z FEB 10
FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO RUEHMS/AMEMBASSY MUSCAT IMMEDIATE 0000
INFO GULF COOPERATION COUNCIL COLLECTIVE IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RHMFISS/JOINT STAFF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE

S E C R E T STATE 014442

SENSITIVE
SIPDIS

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/18/2020
TAGS: [PREL](#) [MARR](#) [MOPS](#) [MU](#)
SUBJECT: (S) ASSESSMENT REQUEST TO SURVEY SITES IN OMAN
FOR POTENTIAL CARGO TRANSLOAD OPERATIONS IN SUPPORT OF
OPERATION ENDURING FREEDOM

Classified By: (U) CLASSIFIED BY: NEA ACTING A/S RONALD SCHLICHER
FOR REASONS 1.4(B) AND (D).

¶1. (U) This is an action request. Please see paragraph 8.

¶2. (S) SUMMARY: Department requests that Embassy Muscat draw on the talking points in paragraph 8 to request additional access to the Port of Salalah and Thumrait Air Base and to appropriate personnel, between 28 Feb to 7 Mar 2010, for the purpose of conducting detailed planning and assessment for the use of these facilities to support cargo transload operations in support of Operation Enduring Freedom in Afghanistan beginning no later than 1 May 2010. Should the result of the planning effort conclude the use of the Port of Salalah and Thumrait Air Base to be the best option, a separate formal request will be conveyed to obtain the enhanced use of these facilities. END SUMMARY.

Background

¶3. (S) President Obama has authorized an increase of 30,000 U.S. military personnel in Afghanistan, which will require expanded air and sea lines of communication (LOCs) to support individual and unit cargo requirements. In support of this increase and on going Operation Enduring Freedom (OEF) requirements, USCENTCOM desires expanded cargo operations using the port of Salalah, Oman as the Sea Port of Debarkation and Embarkation (SPOD/E) and Thumrait AB, Oman as the Air Port of Debarkation and Embarkation (APOD/E). These locations will be targeted to receive U.S. and OEF cargo in support of the increase.

¶4. (S) USTRANSCOM, in support of USCENTCOM, desires to commence operations in Salalah and Thumrait no later than 1 May 2010. Current planning anticipates that operations will be heaviest between May to September 2010 in support of the surge, and then transition to steady state operations for the duration of OEF.

¶5. (S) USCENTCOM plans for the movement of containerized and breakbulk cargo into the port of Salalah starting approximately 1 May 2010, the movement of containerized and break bulk cargo from SPOD/E to Thumrait AB and the movement from Thumrait AB to Airbases in Afghanistan via C-17. The concept for Thumrait AB, as the APOD/E, is for up to six C-17s initially stationed at the airfield with surge capability to receive an additional six C-17 aircraft. Additionally, the plan will include options for up to three USTC transitory commercial B-747, AN-124, or other wide body aircraft.

¶6. (S) To fully develop this plan, USCENTCOM and USTRANSCOM planners plan to conduct asite survey at Salalah Port and

Thumrait AB, 28 February to 7 March 2010 in order to develop a detailed plan that includes necessary life support, petroleum, oil and lubricants (POL), infrastructure, etc. required to: 1) sustain operations at Thumrait AB; 2) ensure adequate secure storage space at Salalah and Thumrait to hold containerized and break bulk cargo; and 3) develop a commercial base plan to transit cargo from port of Salalah to Thumrait AB to ensure daily airlift requirements are available for airlift upload. Planning will reflect that break bulk cargo will be at least tarped while transiting from the Port of Salalah to Thumrait AB. Planning will also address procedures to handle critical/sensitive equipment.

¶7. (S) The proposed mission involves only U.S. forces. It is anticipated that U.S. forces would be based and operate at Thumrait AB and coordinate and contract commercial support for operations at the Port of Salalah.

TALKING POINTS

¶8. (S/ REL OMAN) Department instructs Embassy Muscat to pursue the following objectives with the appropriate Omani government officials:

-- Inform GoO that the U.S. commends and is deeply appreciative of the GoO's robust support to U.S. forces and operations over the years and that the U.S. continues to need stable facilities options to provide logistical support to operations in Afghanistan.

-- Inform the GoO that, per past surveys in Oman and throughout the region, the USG has determined that Thumrait Air Base and the Port of Salalah are potentially best-suited to support the cargo transload mission in support of operations in Afghanistan, and desires to conduct a final site survey specific to the proposed operation.

-- Inform the GoO that sustaining Allied and Coalition forces via Thumrait Air Base and Port of Salalah may be an integral part of the intended mission and President Obama's broader strategy to stabilize the Afghanistan-Pakistan region.

-- Drawing on the background provided above, brief the appropriate officials on the proposed cargo operation.

-- Request that the GoO permit DoD planners to meet with personnel at the Port of Salalah and Thumrait Air Base, 1 to 3 March 2010, to discuss detailed capabilities and requirements to support the proposed cargo transload operations in support of OEF.

-- Inform the GoO that this request is only for access to conduct planning and assessment and that a separate request would be made to begin operations using the Port of Salalah and Thumrait Air Base pending the final assessment recommendation of the planners.

-- Note that, if Oman ultimately approves the operation, the U.S. is willing to discuss infrastructure upgrades and staffing assistance but would request immediate use of the airfield by C-17s while we discuss longer term infrastructure upgrades.

REPORTING DEADLINE

¶9. (S) Please report host government responses via front channel cable to both State (PM/RSAT and NEA/ARP) and DoD (OSD/ISA and OSD/APSA) no later than February 22, 2010.

CLINTON